



**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

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News Release

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VA Taking Life-Saving Campaign to Streets

WASHINGTON – This week, nearly 1,200 life-saving advertisements will go up on city buses, bus shelters, rail and subway stations across the Nation displaying a message of hope for those who have served their country and may be facing an emotional crisis. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is advertising its Suicide Prevention Hotline through Jan. 9, 2011.

“I know of one Veteran who saw these signs on a bus shelter, called the hotline, and came to VA for help that same day,” said VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki. “That Veteran had been walking out to the desert to take his own life. There are thousands of other Veterans like him who are still with us today as a direct result of the hotline. It’s important that we get the word out to everyone who put their lives on the line in defense of this Nation.”

Since its inception in July 2007, VA’s Suicide Prevention Hotline, 1-800-273-TALK (8255), has saved more than 10,000 Veterans and provided counseling for more than 180,000 Veterans and their loved ones at home and overseas. The hotline is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week by trained mental health professionals prepared to deal with immediate crises. The hotline also offers an anonymous online chat feature available at www.suicidepreventionhotline.org. (Look for the chat feature in the upper right hand box.) While implemented for Veterans, any person who calls the hotline and needs help will receive it.

VA has marketed the hotline through mass transit campaigns since summer of 2008, increasing the number of calls and lives saved with each city the campaign has reached. VA is partnering with Blue Line Media (www.BlueLineMedia.com) for the campaign, a [transit advertising](#) company that specializes in helping business and government tell their stories through transit advertising media, such as buses, bus shelters, benches, subways, trains, airports, billboards and more.

- More –

Suicide Hotline 2/2/2/2

VA has also promoted awareness of the hotline through national public service announcements featuring actor Gary Sinise and TV personality Deborah Norville. The transit advertisements and both PSAs are available for download via You Tube and at www.mentalhealth.va.gov/suicide_prevention.

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